

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1                   1.       A method for blocking unauthorized e-mail to at least one e-mail  
2 account comprising the steps of:

3                   providing an e-mail service system for receiving and routing e-mails to the at  
4 least one e-mail account;

5                   providing an independent e-mail provider for receiving and routing e-mails to  
6 the at least one independent e-mail account;

7                   interrogating the independent e-mail account on the independent e-mail  
8 provider from the e-mail service system to route and receive e-mail messages in the  
9 independent e-mail account to an e-mail account on the e-mail service system;

10                  maintaining for each e-mail account an exception list of authorized addressers  
11 identified by at least their e-mail addresses;

12                  providing a payment service system in cooperative operation with the said e-  
13 mail service system for executing a required payment from a unauthorized e-mail sender to  
14 assure delivery of e-mail to an intended recipient ;

15                  receiving e-mail at the e-mail service system from an addresser and comparing  
16 the address of the addresser of the e-mail to the maintained exception list of the intended  
17 recipient's account;

18                  upon finding the address of the addresser of the e-mail on the exception list,  
19 forwarding the e-mail to the intended recipient;

20                  upon not finding the address of the addresser of the e-mail on the exception  
21 list, checking with the payment service system to see if the addresser has made at least the  
22 required payment for forwarding an e-mail to the intended recipient.;

23                  upon finding that the addresser has made at least the required payment for  
24 forwarding an e-mail to the intended recipient, forwarding the e-mail to the intended  
25 recipient; and,

26                  upon not finding that the addresser has made at least the required payment for  
27 forwarding an e-mail to the addressee, informing the addresser by e-mail that, without the  
28 required payment, forwarding an e-mail message from an addresser who is not on the  
29 addressee's exception list will not occur.

1                   2.       The method for blocking unauthorized e-mail to at least one e-mail  
2 account according to claim 1 and wherein the step of, upon not finding that the addresser has

3 made at least the required payment for forwarding an e-mail to the addressee, informing the  
4 addresser by e-mail that, without the required payment, forwarding an e-mail message from  
5 an addresser who is not on the addressee's exception list will not occur occurs directly from e-  
6 mail service system to the sender of the original e-mail.

1                   3. The method for blocking unauthorized e-mail to at least one e-mail  
2 account according to claim 1 and wherein the step of, upon not finding that the addresser has  
3 made at least the required payment for forwarding an e-mail to the addressee, informing the  
4 addresser by e-mail that, without the required payment, forwarding an e-mail message from  
5 an addresser who is not on the addressee's exception list will not occur occurs from e-mail  
6 service system to the sender of the original e-mail through the independent e-mail provider.

1                   4. The method for blocking unauthorized e-mail to at least one e-mail  
2 account according to claim 1 and including an additional step of:

3                   upon receiving and forwarding a reply e-mail from the addressee of a previous  
4 e-mail to the addresser of the previous e-mail, reversing the payment made by the sender of  
5 the previous e-mail if the sender of the previous e-mail made the required payment to assure  
6 the delivery of the previous e-mail to its addressee and the said reply e-mail is sent within a  
7 predetermined period of time.

1                   5. The method for blocking unauthorized e-mail to at least one e-mail  
2 account according to claim 1 and including an additional step of:

3                   upon receiving and executing a request from the addressee of an e-mail to add  
4 to his exception list the address of the addresser who made at least the required payment to  
5 assure the delivery of the said e-mail to its addressee, reversing the payment made by the  
6 addresser if the said request from the addressee is made within a predetermined period of  
7 time.

1                   6. The method for blocking unauthorized e-mail to at least one e-mail  
2 account according to claim 1 and wherein the step of maintaining an exception list for each e-  
3 mail account includes:

4                   providing the capability to add all or some of the addresses in the account  
5 holder's address book in the independent e-mail provider to the exception list.

1                   7.       The method for blocking unauthorized e-mail to at least one e-mail  
2 account according to claim 1 and wherein the step of maintaining an exception list for each e-  
3 mail account includes:

4                   providing the capability to manually add addresses to or delete addresses from  
5 the exception list.

1                   8.       The method for blocking unauthorized e-mail to at least one e-mail  
2 account according to claim 1 and wherein the step of providing a payment service system in  
3 cooperative operation with the said e-mail service system for executing a required payment  
4 from a unauthorized e-mail sender to assure delivery of his e-mail to an intended recipient  
5 includes:

6                   providing at least one electronic form with at least one field of entry for the  
7 account holder's e-mail service provider to set the amount of the required payment for  
8 delivery of an e-mail from an unauthorized addresser to the said account holder's e-mail  
9 account.

1                   9.       The method for blocking unauthorized e-mail to at least one e-mail  
2 account according to claim 1 and including an additional step of:

3                   providing at least one electronic form with at least one field of entry where the  
4 addressee can provide password, ID, and other necessary information of the independent  
5 email account with the independent e-mail provider such that the step of interrogating the  
6 independent e-mail account at the independent e-mail provider from the e-mail service  
7 system to route and receive e-mail messages in the independent e-mail account to an e-mail  
8 account on the e-mail service system can occur.

1                   10.      Apparatus for blocking unauthorized e-mail to at least one e-mail  
2 recipient comprising:

3                   an e-mail service system for receiving and routing e-mails to the at least one e-  
4 mail recipient;

5                   an exception list of authorized addresses for e-mail recipients maintained at  
6 the e-mail service system;

7                   an independent e-mail provider;

8                   means for interrogating the independent e-mail provider from the e-mail  
9   service system whereby received e-mail messages in the independent e-mail account with the  
10 independent e-mail provider is routed to the e-mail account on the e-mail service system;  
11                   a payment service system for executing a required payment from a  
12 unauthorized e-mail sender to assure delivery of e-mail to an intended recipient ;  
13                   the e-mail service system including means for receiving e-mail from an  
14 addresser and comparing the address of the addresser of the e-mail to the maintained  
15 exception list including means upon finding the address of the addresser of the e-mail on the  
16 exception list, forwarding the e-mail to the recipient,  
17                   an interactive connection between the e-mail service system and the payment  
18 service system to enable the e-mail service system upon not finding the address of the  
19 addresser of the e-mail on the exception list to interact with the payment service system to see  
20 if the addresser has made at least a payment required for forwarding an e-mail to the  
21 addressee from an addresser who is not on the exception list of the addressee. ;  
22                   means at the e-mail service system upon finding that the addresser has made at  
23 least the required payment for forwarding an e-mail to the addressee; and,  
24                   means at the e-mail service system upon not finding that the addresser has  
25 made at least the required payment for forwarding an e-mail to the addressee from an  
26 addresser who is not on the exception list of the addressee to informing the addresser by e-  
27 mail of the required payment for forwarding an e-mail message to the addressee.